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—This Week—

	Page.
Stagnation in Theological Education.....	2
Commending Friends	2
An Invidious Comparison	3
A Sabbath in Paris	3
The Korean Mission	5
How Bible Has Aided World's Great Authors.....	8
The Green and the Gold	14
Recollections of Memphis Presbytery	14
Christ as Our Example in Prayer	15
Presbyteries	22
Going to Elkins	25

Editorial Notes

A cable despatch from Rome says that the Pope has determined to sell no more titles of nobility. It appears that the Vatican has derived much revenue from this source. The title of "count" has been sold for ten thousand dollars, and that of "duke" at the same price, cash in advance. It is said that France is crowded with Vatican nobleman who have thus bought their titles for cash. The Pope's act is regarded as a step in the right direction.

The young people's paper, "Onward," has been doing well, and is securing an increasing circulation. For the sake of economy, and as an experiment it has been published so far in conjunction with the United Presbyterian Church Publishing House at Pittsburg. But its progress has been so encouraging that it will now be entirely our own paper, and be published at Richmond. The Rev. Tilden Sherer of the Hoge Memorial church, Richmond becomes the sole editor and manager, and yet better fitness for its useful purposes and a more extended circulation is confidently anticipated. For the present Mr. Sherer will continue to minister to the Hoge Memorial church.

Often have we heard good, noble ministers bewailing the fact that the Presbyterians report fewer additions to the membership in any one year than some of the other denominations. True. But that does not prove a smaller ratio of growth. A religious census of the United States has just been completed. The Presbyterian growth between 1890 and 1906 is reported at

43.3 per cent; that of the Congregationalists was 36 per cent and of the Methodist was 25 per cent. The Lutherans' membership has increased 71 per cent, being reinforced largely by immigration. Episcopalians have gained 67 per cent and the Baptist 52. The latter gain has been to a large extent among the negroes of the South. The average Protestant gain has been 44 per cent; that of Presbyterians is 43 per cent.

In these eighteen years the population of the country has increased between forty and fifty per cent. Of these about nine million were Roman Catholic immigrants. This is a little less than one-half of the immigration. Omitting these the growth of the population has been about thirty per cent. The Protestant church membership has grown by 6,280,000, about forty-four per cent. This is not all that we ought to expect, but it is far from discouraging.

We see a statement that in the town of Lima, Ohio, there are twenty-seven Protestant pastorates. Of these at least sixteen have been vacated within the last twelve months, and seven more within the previous year. Within four years past every church in the town has changed its pastor. We raise the question how the churches of that town can hope to grow. The value of a pastor's work depends very largely on his acquaintance with the people personally. Two years or three is too brief to attain the greatest usefulness of a pastor. Churches that change often are apt to grow slowly.

In the "Interior" we see a very pertinent suggestion as to the decadence in our churches and in our community of a sense of sin. It remarks that a sermon on the exceeding sinfulness of sin is at present rarely heard. We apprehend that in this remark there is only too much truth. It was our fortune to spend a week, not long ago, incognito, in a town in Central Indiana. We attended each of the three churches in that town, at least once. In not one of them did we hear any prayer for the forgiveness of sin. In one sermon, on some such text as "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden," we expected to hear some allusion to the burden of sin, but we heard it not. We are convinced that the preachers were avoiding the suggestion of human sinfulness. Pastors may well pause to think upon this remark.